CHATEAU MONTELENA
ESTABLISHED 1882

2012 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton, July 2014

INTRODUCTION

What a difference a year makes. Literally hot on the heels of the chilly 2011 vintage, 2012 delivered a perfect growing season and a bumper crop to boot. More than anything else, we welcomed the sunshine. After honing our skills through the challenges of three consecutive cool years and appreciating the resulting stylistic nuances, it felt great to reach back into the tool belt and pull out some of the magic that characterized the "Legendary" vintages of the past four decades.

VINTAGE WEATHER

Feeling ecstatic understates our reaction when the first Chardonnay grapes came off the vines in early September, three full weeks earlier than the previous year. Devoid of extremes, 2012 will be remembered as a blockbuster vintage. There were no frost events, brutal heat spikes, drying winds, or excessive rains. Just perfect Napa Valley ripening weather. Late rains in March replenished the soils right in time for budbreak, which kicked off a remarkable period of grand growth and ideal maturation. It's in these vintages—1997 and 2005 were similar—when the unique characteristics of our vineyards really shine through in the aromatics and flavors of the wines.

NOSE

In the glass, the 2012 Chardonnay bursts with aromas of ripe peach, green apple, and honeydew. Next comes a touch of vanilla, lavender and orange blossom, with an underlying note of star jasmine.

PALATE

The concentration of the wine is evident on the palate: the rich viscosity is cut by bright acid and layers of kiwi, grapefruit, and soft minerality.

FINISH

The finish is pure bliss with a touch of sweet oak and lemon curd that just doesn't quit.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES
September 7–27

ALCOHOL
13.6%

BLEND
100% Chardonnay

BARREL AGING
10 months, 100% French oak. 8% new

BOTTLING DATE
August 2013

WINEMAKER
Matt Crafton

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